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THE PRESIDENT

DEMOCRACIES are remorselessly impersonal. The individual may falter and stand still, but the great machine of national need moves on. The functions of government of the people, by the people, for the people, must be performed without let or hindrance. So the temporary failure of the President's health, while it caused universal regret and sincerest sympathy, could call no halt upon the progress of affairs. The momentous issues of the day, in foreign relations and in domestic interests, to which he was so devoted and in which he was so absorbed, had to be dealt with in his absence, just as though he had been present. This was not callous inhumanity: it was practical democracy.

This hiatus in the President's official activities served to emphasize the differentiation between his personality and his policies. He became for the time no more a personal factor in the matters in which he had been engaged; no longer subject to criticism or capable of controversy. The policy which he had been advocating and the cause which was so near to his heart remained entirely unaffected in their merits or demerits; and the public attitude toward them, whether favorable or unfavorable, remained unchanged by the deplorable incident of his illness.

The most respectful, considerate and sympathetic course that could possibly be pursued, therefore, and the one which unquestionably the President himself most desired, was for the Senate to continue without interruption and with all

appropriate expedition to the final disposition of the great undertaking upon which the President had been engaged and in his unsparing and extraordinary labors upon which he had too greatly overtaxed his own strength and health.

The remorselessness of democracies does not, however, extend to demanding that its servants shall overwork themselves. In the present case, mingled with whatever appreciation there may be of the President's indomitable industry and passionate zeal, there is deep regret that he insisted upon an exercise of those qualities to a point beyond the limits of strength and safety. In justice to the nation it must be said that it did not demand nor desire such sacrifice on his part. His overtaking of his strength—we say it entirely without censoriousness—was voluntary. It was wilful. It was unnecessary. We need not speculate upon his motives. Let us dismiss all less worthy suppositions and assume that he was possessed by a desire to have the great works done in the best possible way and therefore determined to do them himself, and that he overestimated his own powers of endurance. Still we must regret his error of judgment.

This error was the more strange because he himself had formerly dwelt in public utterances upon the physical impossibility of a President's doing all the work of the Executive Department, and the necessity, therefore, of his calling to his aid the most competent assistants that are to be found. Surely Mr. Wilson could have found more efficient aids than many of those with whom he surrounded himself, to whom he might confidently have entrusted many of the tasks which he took upon himself. Especially might he have sent competent and representative Commissioners abroad to do the work of peace-making under his directions, while he spared himself the exhausting labors of long journeys and protracted controversies, and avoided letting important domestic business fall into arrears. Thus he could have kept the Senate constantly in touch with what was being done, and thus greatly have expedited ratification after the signature of the Treaty. Thus, too, it is to be believed, he could have kept the Senate and himself more closely in accord, and could have avoided the unhappy dissensions and even recriminations which marked his recent relations with that body and which could scarcely have

failed to have a distressing effect upon him personally as well as publicly upon a nation which always desires to see its governmental business conducted with urbanity and decorum.

Meantime the most loyal and sincere supporters of the President's policies and the equally resolute and sincere opponents of them are in perfect accord—at the date of the writing of these lines—in deploring the President's indisposition and in sympathizing with him in his suffering, and will be in similar accord—before, we trust, the date of the publication and reading of these lines—in congratulating him upon his complete restoration to health and strength, for his own happiness and for his renewed and increasing usefulness to the nation.

STRIKE AIMS AND LEADERS

THE two great strikes of a few weeks ago, the one in Great Britain, the other in the steel trade of the United States, were much more important as manifestations of some current tendencies in industrial agitation than they were in their economic results. Their results were in fact inconsiderable, while their aims, their temper and their leadership were of the greatest possible significance.

The British strike, which was first in order of time, had its inception in a purpose to subject the entire government of the United Kingdom to trade union dictation. Under penalty of a universal strike which would paralyze all the activities of the nation, the government was to accept a policy and a programme in both foreign and domestic legislation and administration prescribed by the unions. The control of the army and navy, the making of treaties with other powers, and the fiscal policy of the nation, were all to be determined by the unions. Although Mr. Lloyd George had to some extent played the part of Frankenstein, he revolted at such demands and made it evident that they would be resisted with all the force at the government's control.

Thereupon the strike directors changed their tactics. Realizing that such revolutionary demands could not be enforced for the present, they pretended to drop them, or